



Review of Public Notices for Development Projects in the Planning Division

*Presented to the Planning Commission
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Presenter

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Types of Notification

- Letters to adjacent/abutting properties
- Newspaper notices
- Signs on property
- Agenda postings
- Board Docs
- Social Media

Current Requirements

Major Planning Projects Requiring Public Notices and Public Hearings. Legislative – not permitted outright.

- Zoning and subdivision code amendments.
- Non-conforming use requests.
- Rezoning & Planned Development requests.
- Docket 90 St. Charles (PUD), Docket 250, Swan Point master plans.

Current Requirements *(cont.)*

Major Planning Projects Requiring Public Notices And Public Hearings. Legislative – not permitted Outright

- Variances, Special Exceptions (BOA).
- Historic Landmark Designations (HPC).
- Various land use studies (public participation).

Current Requirements

*Planning Projects without any Public Notice
(Typically Approved by Staff or Planning Commission)*

- Subdivisions – Minor, < 7 lots (Plats)
- Waivers to Subdivision Regulations (road changes, design standards)
- ✓ Subdivisions – Major (Preliminary Plans) in Tier I, II Areas (current discussion today)
- ✓ Site Development Plans – commercial-retail, office, multi-family projects (Only Site Plans within St. Charles PUD are required to be approved by the Planning Commission. All others are reviewed by staff)

Recent Code Amendments

- SRA 12-17 (11.5.13) Set time limits for lifetime of Preliminary Plans.
- SRA14-22. (11.18.14) Changed process, reduced time frames and costs for minor projects (plats).
- SRA 14-23 (11.18.14) Implemented SB236, Required public hearings for Major Subdivisions in Tier III Areas
- ZTA 14-09 (11.18.14) Increased required notification distances, number of signs for public hearings.

Other Changes Under Development

- Planning Commission rules and procedures
- Board of Appeals rules and procedures
- Board of Appeals – appeal procedures

Issues of Concern

Requiring Public Hearings for Preliminary Plans & Site Plans (Applicant/Developer Issues)

- Public meetings imply the right of the public to make changes to projects, even when they comply with codes, regulations and laws.
- Subdivisions and site plans are a technical review of projects that comply with Zoning Ordinance and Subdivision Regulations.
- Developer reliance on governmental regulations – legal issues.

Issues of Concern (cont.)

Re: Adding Preliminary Plans & Site Plans: (Applicant/Developer Issues)

- Public meetings can increase time, cost to the county and the applicant.
- Changes to plans after design is completed is costly resulting in reluctance by applicants. (fairness issue)

Issues of Concern (cont.)

Re: Adding Preliminary Plans & Site Plans (Neighborhood/Citizen Issues)

- People have a right to review and comment on development projects.
- Process needs to allow for public information, education on projects.
- Citizen participation in projects that impact their neighborhoods could result in better designed projects.
- Improved compatibility, understanding.
- Win-win results are possible.

What are valid public issues?

(for Preliminary Plans & Site Plans)

- a) Drainage area information
- b) Natural resources impacts
- c) Traffic and access locations
- d) Public amenities
- e) Location of development, density
- f) Buffering, lighting
- g) Cultural-Historic resources
- h) Infrastructure location
- i) Code compliance

Proposed Change to the Subdivision Code

New subdivision code amendment:

1. Require a “conceptual” subdivision plan to be reviewed prior to the more detailed Preliminary Subdivision Plan.
2. Requires a public meeting on the Conceptual Subdivision Plan with public notices and allow public comments.
3. PC authorizes applicant, to proceed. Do not approve conceptual plans.

Proposed Change to the Subdivision Code

4. Provide applicant and PC a list of issues raised at the public meeting for consideration in the design of the Preliminary Subdivision Plans.
5. Preliminary Subdivision Plans submitted and reviewed after conceptual plan. Additional public comments allowed at Preliminary Plan review.

New Notification Process

- a) Provide letters to neighbors of Conceptual Subdivision Plans under review.
- b) Place notification of meeting signs on the property.
- c) Allow for public comments at the meeting.
- d) PC authorizes applicant to proceed.

What details would a Conceptual Subdivision Plan include?

- Project name, location, size, zoning, boundary area with roads.
- Points of entry, conceptual main road.
- Natural resource inventory, anticipated impacts.
- Development parcel and open space, buffering.
- Public amenities.
- Type of development proposed, locations.
- Anticipated drainage areas.
- Public facility needs, general impacts.
- Estimated time frame: start to finish.

The Benefits of the Proposed Process

- Allows for public input and understanding early in the process before plans are in final form.
- Allows developer an opportunity to make changes before they become complaints from citizens.
- Simpler “conceptual” subdivision plan first, is less expensive to change if needed.

Direction

- Consider process as proposed and provide staff direction to proceed or not to proceed.
- Changes will require code amendments to the Subdivision Regulations, public hearings on the text amendments to require conceptual subdivision plans.
- County Commissioners approval of the text amendment.

**Public Notices for Development Projects
in the Planning Division
(follow up briefing)**



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Mission Statement

The mission of Charles County Government is to provide our citizens the highest quality service possible in a timely, efficient, and courteous manner. To achieve this goal, our government must be operated in an open and accessible atmosphere, be based on comprehensive long- and short-term planning, and have an appropriate managerial organization tempered by fiscal responsibility.

Vision Statement

Charles County is a place where all people thrive and businesses grow and prosper; where the preservation of our heritage and environment is paramount, where government services to its citizens are provided at the highest level of excellence; and where the quality of life is the best in the nation.